

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

11-4-2019

Gardner-Webb Alumna's Goal is Working to Destigmatize Mental Health Issues

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

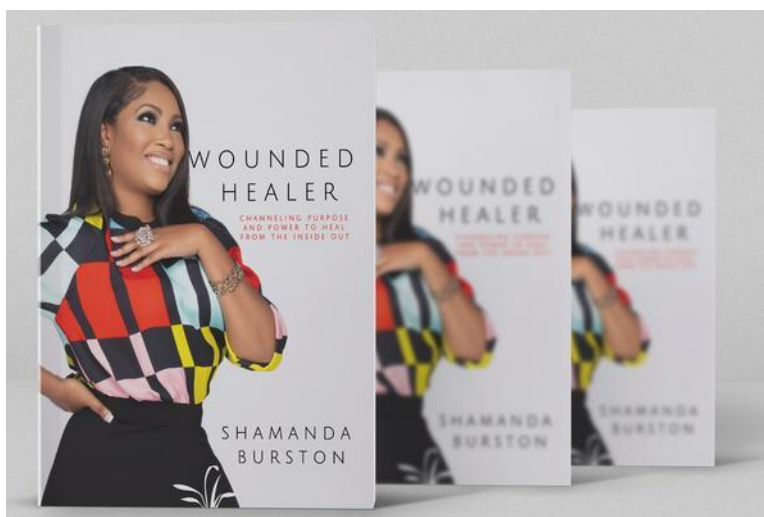
Gardner-Webb Alumna's Goal is Working to Destigmatize Mental Health Issues

webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gwu-alumna-publishes-first-book/

Office of University
Communications

November 4, 2019

Shamanda Burston Publishes Her First Book, 'Wounded Healer'



At the age of 19, Shamanda Burston, a native of Shelby, N.C., couldn't imagine completing a bachelor's or a master's degree. Nobody else in her family had attended college, and she was a single mother with two children. While working on an associate's degree, she learned about GOAL—The Degree Completion Program at Gardner-Webb University.

Burston, who now lives in Atlanta, Ga., graduated from GWU in 2012 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in human services and obtained her Master of Arts/Education Specialist degree in mental health counseling in 2014. In June 2019, she published her first book, "Wounded Healer," which is a story about her life. It is available from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million, and other retailers.

In the following Q&A, Burston shares how her experiences at Gardner-Webb gave her confidence to achieve her goals.

Q: How did the staff at GWU help you transition to Gardner-Webb?

Shamanda: I didn't think attending a prestigious school, such as Gardner-Webb was a possibility for me. With the help of the GWU admissions counselors, I was able to transfer my 60 credits from Cleveland Community College to complete my bachelor's degree in only three years while working full time and raising my children.

Q: Why did you choose your field of study?

Shamanda: I like to think that the profession of psychology and counseling chose me. My life experiences shaped me to become a natural counselor. Learning and studying human behavior also intrigued me.



Shamanda Burston poses with the hosts of FOX 46 Good Day Charlotte.

Q: What did you value most about your Gardner-Webb experience?

Shamanda: I truly enjoyed the family dynamic. I valued the openness and understanding of my professors. As a first generation college student and young single mom, I never felt judged by my professors. I have to thank Dr. Willie Fleming, a person of color, who encouraged me to pursue a field in counseling. He referred to me as a 'self-affirmed woman,' and that gave me the courage to be my authentic self. I am truly grateful to Dr. James Morgan for serving as a reference during my internships and creating an opportunity for me to be a published researcher during my graduate program. Dr. Sharon Webb gave wonderful supervision and direction.

Q: How did your classes prepare you for continuing your education and your career?

Shamanda: If someone would have told me I'd be a motivational speaker years ago, I would have laughed. My undergrad and graduate programs at GWU provided me opportunities to create and present my research presentations in class and at national conferences to overcome my fear of public speaking. Although I struggle with anxiety, I know that I wouldn't have reached my current level of success without the practice, feedback and encouragement provided during my classes at GWU.

Q: What are your other accomplishments?

Shamanda: Along with providing mental health/addiction services as a licensed clinician, I launched my brand and e-commerce store focused on anti-stress products and educational media content (LuLu B. Inc.). In 2017, I was nominated for the Forbes 30 under 30 list. I have been interviewed on FOX 46 Good Day Charlotte to discuss mental health awareness. Currently, I am in pre-production of my first feature movie. My goal is to introduce and integrate mental health awareness into media platforms, to expand the knowledge of mental health to a larger platform... all for the cause of de-stigmatizing it.

[Learn more about the GWU School of Psychology and Counseling.](#)

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.